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Policy directives to the drug programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and strengthening the drug programme and the role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as its governing body, including administrative, budgetary and strategic management questions

Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
Twenty-fifth session
Vienna, 23-27 May 2016
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda**
Strategic management, budgetary and administrative questions: work of the working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Work of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present note has been prepared pursuant to Economic and Social Council decision 2015/234, in which the Council renewed the mandate of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime until the first half of 2017, as well as Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolutions 52/13, 54/10, 54/17, 56/11 and 58/1 and Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolutions 18/3, 20/1, 20/9, 22/2 and 24/1. The present note covers the work of the working group between 9 November 2015 and 18 January 2016. Information on the work of the working group during the preceding period of 8 June-5 October 2015 can be found in document E/CN.7/2015/6/Add.1-E/CN.15/2015/6/Add.1.

* E/CN.7/2016/1.
** E/CN.15/2016/1.

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I. Deliberations

1. From 9 November 2015 to 18 January 2016, the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime held one formal meeting and two informal meetings. It continued to consider issues under the items of the agenda approved by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 2015/234 and by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in its resolution 52/13 and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in its resolution 18/3 and in accordance with the terms of reference annexed to those resolutions, as well as with provisions contained in Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolutions 54/10, 54/17, 56/11 and 58/1 and Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolutions 20/1, 20/9, 22/2 and 24/1.

2. At the meeting of the working group held on 9 November, the Director of the Division for Management of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) referred to the draft consolidated budget for the biennium 2016-2017 for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and presented fund projections for the same biennium, highlighting the main changes, objectives and key challenges for each fund source. For the biennium 2016-2017, special purpose funds were to increase 6.2 per cent and were projected to cover 84.6 per cent of the budget. In comparison, general purpose funds would continue to deteriorate, decreasing 39.7 per cent from the previous biennium, and were projected to cover 1.5 per cent of the overall budget. It was also indicated that the transition to full cost recovery would be extended until the end of 2017 in order not to negatively impact programme implementation. The Director also highlighted that the consolidated budget for the biennium 2016-2017 illustrated transparent, fair and consistent programme delivery, sound direct and indirect costing principles and a strong cost-conscious culture throughout management and field offices. The meeting was also informed of the status of Umoja, which went live on 9 November 2015. The Director of the Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs of UNODC presented a revised timeline for the preparation of the draft strategic framework for UNODC for the biennium 2018-2019 and a revised draft text of the document. The Secretariat presented an update on results-based management, indicating that its implementation was decentralized, with managers being responsible for planning, monitoring and reporting. Delegations were also informed of the work of the Research and Trend Analysis Branch in helping States develop indicators for the achievement of the goals of Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to help build national capacity to monitor progress in achieving the targets under the sustainable development goals. Finally, the meeting was informed that all programmes and projects would continue to be evaluated at least once every four years but that training would also take place to transfer the knowledge of UNODC to national evaluators.

3. At the meeting held on 7 December 2015, the Chief of the Human Resources Management Service of UNODC made a presentation on the composition of UNODC staff. He explained that the recruitment of staff members for posts subject to geographical distribution was governed by the system of desirable ranges at the Secretariat level, which was applicable only to posts funded from the regular budget. He provided information on the current gender distribution of staff,

indicating that the Office engaged in outreach activities with the view to soliciting applications from qualified women for existing vacancies. Several speakers indicated that more should be done by the Office to ensure equitable geographical distribution and representation of women in UNODC. Delegations continued their consideration of the draft resolutions on the budget for the biennium 2016-2017 for the Fund of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Fund (contained in document E/CN.7/2015/17-E/CN.15/2015/20), which they had started at informal consultations held on 2 December. The meeting was addressed by the United Nations Deputy Controller, who elaborated on the Secretariat-wide implementation of full cost recovery and Umoja. A revised version of the strategic framework for the period 2018-2019 for UNODC, which incorporated all the comments received from Member States at previous meetings of the working group and at informal consultations, was endorsed for further consideration on 10 December, at the reconvened sessions of the Commissions.

4. The Executive Director addressed the formal meeting of the working group held on 18 January 2016, remarking on the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and expressing the commitment of the Office to implementing the Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals.[1] The Executive Director also recalled the implementation of the full cost recovery funding model, which would continue throughout the biennium 2016-2017, as well as the implementation of Umoja. He stressed the important role of the working group and expressed the commitment of UNODC to continuing to inform the working group on matters related to the governance and financial situation of the Office, as well as to continuing to promote a culture of evaluation to ensure the efficiency and transparency of programme delivery. He also expressed his commitment to achieving geographical balance and gender parity among UNODC staff.

5. The Secretariat elaborated on the comprehensive framework for development embedded in the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals, which placed the UNODC mandate on drugs and crime within the larger development agenda. The Secretariat also presented a short overview of those sustainable development goals of the Agenda which were most relevant to the work of UNODC and informed the working group of how the activities of UNODC, as well as its strategic framework, were aligned with them. Reference was made to the importance of indicators in monitoring the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and to the contribution of UNODC to the work undertaken by the Statistical Commission in that regard. The meeting was presented with the key evaluation results of the regional programmes for West and East Africa, including lessons learned and best practices identified. The regional programmes for Arab States, West Africa and East Africa faced challenges related to the security situation in some countries as well as dependence on voluntary funding. Member States were called upon to consider providing soft-earmarked funding, which would allow for a flexible and fast reactive approach to newly emerging challenges. The Secretariat also provided information on the West African Network of Central Authorities and Prosecutors against Organized Crime programme, which provided technical assistance and tools in specialized areas, such as requests for mutual legal assistance and extradition, to criminal justice officials and practitioners. The meeting agreed, on the basis of

[1] Adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/1.

previous practice, that the meetings of the working group would be suspended until June 2016, after the sessions of the Commissions, in order to allow time for the preparation of a new programme of work.

II. Organizational and administrative matters

6. Under the guidance of the co-chairs, Hernán Estrada Román (Nicaragua) and Ignacio Baylina Ruiz (Spain), the working group held two informal meetings, on 9 November and 7 December 2015. A formal meeting was held on 18 January 2016.

7. Informal consultations were held on 25 November on the strategic framework for the period 2018-2019 for UNODC, and on 27 November and 2 December on the consolidated budget for the biennium 2016-2017 for UNODC.

8. The Secretariat continued to provide documents and information to the working group by electronic means and in hard copy, including through a web page accessible to the public (www.unodc.org/unodc/en/commissions/FINGOV/FINGOV-index.html) and a secure web page for Member States (www.unodc.org/missions/en/wggf/index.html), set up and maintained by the Secretariat for the use of the working group.

III. Action by the Commissions

9. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs, at its reconvened fifty-eighth session, and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, at its reconvened twenty-fourth session, elected Hernán Estrada Román (Nicaragua), and Ignacio Baylina Ruiz (Spain), co-chairs of the working group, in accordance with the procedure set out in Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 52/13 and Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolution 18/3.